

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 661

By Harris

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Tamia Potter, the first Black female neurosurgery resident in Vanderbilt University's history.

WHEREAS, it is our privilege to honor those gifted students whose hard work and devotion have resulted in phenomenal achievements along their path to professional success; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Dr. Tamia Potter, who recently accepted a neurosurgery residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, becoming the first Black female neurosurgery resident in the university's 148-year history; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt trained its first neurosurgery resident in 1932, making Dr. Potter the first Black woman to join the university's Department of Neurological Surgery in ninety-one years; and

WHEREAS, a native of Florida, twenty-six-year-old Tamia Potter is a third-generation alumna of Florida A&M University, a historically Black university, from which she graduated *summa cum laude* in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry; she is currently a medical student at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine; and

WHEREAS, her first job in the medical field was as a certified nursing assistant (CNA); at the age of seventeen, she began working in a nursing home dementia unit and later worked in various hospitals. Although she had a full ride during her undergraduate career, she worked as a CNA full time on the night shift; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Tamia Potter was built to be a trailblazer; in addition to being the first in her family to attend medical school, she was the first Black student body vice president of

Wakulla High School, the first Black person on the school's Honor Court, and the first Black Miss Wakulla County; and

WHEREAS, as Dr. Potter embarks on another "first" journey and begins her seven-year residency, approximately 5.7 percent of physicians in the United States identify as Black or African American, according to the latest data from the Association of American Medical Colleges; a report by the association found there were only thirty-three Black women in the neurosurgical field in the United States in 2018; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her training in neurosurgery, Dr. Tamia Potter has a vision that includes an increasing amount of Black and brown diversity at the bedside, providing the highest levels of medical care; the importance of that diversity in terms of patient outcomes is something she believes is underestimated, and representation is important because it was what pushed her to believe in herself; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Potter believes the reason few minorities pursue medicine is lack of guidance, knowledge, and support from friends and family who have gone before, all of which make the chances of success much harder; she is thus committed to mentoring other young Black doctors and helping them navigate what can be a complicated and unfamiliar system; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Tamia Potter's integrity and devotion to serving others will surely serve her well as she continues her medical training at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that we honor this exceptional young professional on this important milestone; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Dr. Tamia Potter, the first Black female

neurosurgery resident in Vanderbilt University's history, welcoming her to Nashville and wishing her every success in her residency and beyond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.